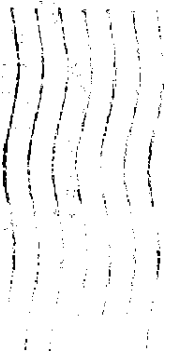
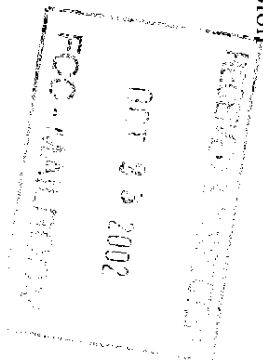


2-60119 PRESIDENT
Jackson State
 COMMUNITY COLLEGE
 A Division of Board of Regents for Higher Education
 2048 NORTH PARKWAY JACKSON TN 38202



Kevin J. Martin, Commissioner
 Federal Communications Commission
 445 12th Street, SW
 Washington, DC 20554



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October 16, 2002

Kevin J. Martin, Commissioner
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Commissioner Martin:

I am writing in support of BellSouth's request that they be allowed to enter the long distance market in Tennessee and Florida.

The Tennessee Regulatory Authority has recognized that BellSouth has met all the requirements outlined by Congress to enter the long distance market, and the FCC has approved BellSouth's applications for its seven other states. BellSouth uses the same operating systems in all nine states to process orders for competitive carriers. It has in place a set of more than 2000 performance measurements that assure BellSouth will continue to provide the same excellent quality service to its wholesale customers as it does for its retail customers.

I believe these are just some of the benefits that Tennessee consumers will be allowed to enjoy if this request is approved:

Customer savings

- BellSouth entry into long distance will result in lower overall phone bills for customers.
- Every day that BellSouth is forced to remain on the sidelines, Tennessee consumers lose money due to unrealized savings.

Competition

- BellSouth entry into long distance will bring real competition to an industry dominated by only three companies. This has been demonstrated in the states that have received FCC approval.
- Local competition is alive and well in Tennessee. Approximately 100 companies are currently offering competitive local service and about 75 others are authorized by the Tennessee Regulatory Authority.

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Telephone (731) 425-2002 • Facsimile (731) 425-2642 • Internet: croberts@jscc.c.tn.us

Fairness to customers/Choice

Customers of all other local telephone companies can receive both local and long distance services from their local company. BellSouth is the only local company prohibited by law from offering its customers that opportunity.

Economic impact

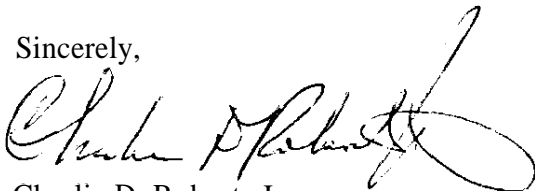
- BellSouth entry into long distance will encourage continued infrastructure development and capital investment in Tennessee.

Local commitment

- BellSouth has built a communications network throughout Tennessee that is second-to-none.
- The strength and dependability of BellSouth's network has proven for the State in supporting sustainable economic growth and in weathering natural disasters such as tornadoes and ice storms.
- Tennessee is home to some 6,000 BellSouth employees and 6,000 retirees. In addition, more than 20,000 BellSouth stockholders live in Tennessee.

If I can provide additional support for BellSouth's request, I would be happy to do so. You may contact me at 731-425-2602.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Charlie D. Roberts Jr.", written in black ink.

Charlie D. Roberts Jr.
President

/lcc